

ACTIONS

The County will initiate the following within two years

THE ECONOMY, HOUSING, AND TRANSPORTATION	
Create implementation plans for agri-culinary tourism and heritage tourism, two of the focus areas in the <i>2020 Strategic Tourism Plan</i> .	
Develop an Energy Focus Areas Strategy to provide for the energy needs of growing businesses while prioritizing renewable energy solutions and addressing energy concerns in key geographical areas of the county.	
Seek increased funding to reimburse employers for on-the-job training that enhances employees' skills and increases their wages.	
Update the <i>Tompkins County Affordable Housing Needs Assessment</i> and engage the broader housing community in revising the <i>Tompkins County Housing Strategy</i> .	
Better define the housing needs of client populations served by County human services agencies.	
Assist municipalities in developing strategies to help homebuyers compare and evaluate the energy efficiency of existing housing.	
Identify the most critical elements of the County-owned highway infrastructure network for use in prioritizing investment of County funds.	
Conduct a study to identify electric vehicle charging station development needs and opportunities.	
Investigate additional park and ride and other ways to provide better, safer access to existing transit routes in suburban and rural areas.	
THE ENVIRONMENT	
Monitor development activity within the Natural Features Focus Areas and Agricultural Resource Focus Areas and share that information with municipalities.	
Identify Purchase of Development Rights priority projects for implementation in the Agricultural Resource Focus Areas.	
Develop a conservation funding strategy that accurately captures need for key conservation acquisitions.	
Build on the recommendations in the <i>Finger Lakes Trail Corridor Protection Plan</i> to identify specific areas and tools to improve connectivity between Natural Features Focus Areas.	
Contribute to NYS DEC's work assessing and improving water quality in the southern end of Cayuga Lake.	
Develop an integrated green infrastructure program that combines existing efforts to identify and protect the quality of stream corridors, wetlands, and aquifers.	
Complete the NYSDOT Relocation and Site Redevelopment Feasibility Study.	
Support the Water Resources Council in its work to update delineation of wetland resources in the County.	
CLIMATE CHANGE	
By the end of 2015, finalize the Tompkins County Energy Roadmap to determine the most effective and efficient means of meeting the community's long-term energy and greenhouse gas emissions goals and begin implementation.	
Conduct a greenhouse gas emissions inventory for both the community and County government using 2014 data.	
Work with municipalities to develop tools to encourage widespread deployment of renewable energy systems.	
Assess the vulnerability of the County government's critical facilities to the impacts of climate change.	
Prepare a community disaster recovery plan to prepare the community to take the actions, including those that build economic resilience, to bounce back from a disaster should it occur.	
Conduct an inventory of pipeline stream crossings in the County and identify those of highest priority in order to advance measures to reduce risk to human health and the environment.	
NEIGHBORHOODS AND COMMUNITIES	
Develop a healthy communities strategy as a collaborative effort of County departments.	
Establish a formal role for the County in trail development.	
Prepare and share a sidewalk inventory with municipalities.	
Work with municipalities to identify potential infill or redevelopment sites within Development Focus Areas.	
Provide technical assistance to municipalities to establish land use policies and regulations that support development within Development Focus Areas.	



# TOMPKINS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

## 2015 SUMMARY

For full plan document: <http://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/compplan>

The Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan presents a vision for the future of the community based on a set of principles that reflect community values as expressed by the County Legislature. Three of these principles, addressing Sustainability, Regional Cooperation, and Fiscal Responsibility, are overarching and reflected throughout the Plan. The remaining principles are topical and are covered in more detail in individual chapters, each of which contains: specific policies, a snapshot of existing conditions, a discussion of issues and opportunities, and a short list of actions the County intends to initiate within two years.

In rural areas, the Plan envisions a working landscape of farms and forests providing products and jobs that support a strong rural economy, while providing for management and protection of these resources to maintain their ability to sustain the community into the future. The working landscape will continue to be intertwined with a protected, and increasingly connected, network of natural areas that provide multiple benefits including clean water, outdoor recreation, and habitat for wildlife.

In the urban areas , including the City of Ithaca and villages, the Plan sees an increasing population largely resulting from infill and redevelopment projects providing housing choices and locations for businesses to start and grow. New housing will allow people to live closer to employment and serve an increased senior population as well as the younger workers needed to fill the jobs provided by both an expanding economy and the retirement of baby boomers.

In suburban areas, opportunities will continue for limited new development through infill and a few new higher density neighborhoods that may emerge in accordance with town plans. It will be important that these new areas develop at locations and densities that support existing or easily extended infrastructure, as well as transit routes and trail corridors that provide transportation options.

Rural, urban, and suburban areas will develop in ways that dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This will include new and renovated buildings that are much more energy efficient and incorporate both on-site and off-site renewable energy production. The transportation system will offer more choices that are less energy intensive, including modes utilizing renewable energy. Renewable energy will be generated in rural, suburban, and urban areas at appropriate sites and scales that together can provide a secure energy supply for community needs.

Altogether the Plan envisions a community where rural, suburban, and urban areas not only coexist but are mutually reinforcing. Together they will offer a broad range of living and working choices to county residents.

### PRINCIPLES

**Tompkins County should be a place where:**

- ◆ the needs of current and future generations are met without compromising the ecosystems upon which they depend.
- ◆ all levels of government work cooperatively to address regional issues.
- ◆ taxpayer dollars are invested in public infrastructure and facilities in the most efficient manner possible.
- ◆ economic prosperity is accessible to all.
- ◆ housing is affordable, safe, energy efficient, and appealing.
- ◆ transportation choices are efficient, affordable, and healthy for people and the environment.
- ◆ natural features and working rural landscapes are preserved and enhanced.
- ◆ water resources are clean, safe, and protected.
- ◆ the energy system meets community needs without contributing additional greenhouse gases to the atmosphere.
- ◆ the entire community is prepared for the economic, environmental, and social impacts of climate change.
- ◆ the built environment promotes healthy, safe, and active lifestyles.
- ◆ new development is focused in compact, walkable, mixed-use communities.

# POLICIES

It is the policy of Tompkins County to:

## THE ECONOMY, HOUSING, AND TRANSPORTATION

### The Economy

- Support economic development that provides high-quality employment opportunities with living wages and benefits.
- Promote the growth and development of local businesses and encourage the purchase of locally-produced goods and services.
- Work with economic development agencies and institutions of higher education to diversify and expand the local economy and enhance community vitality.
- Promote innovation and technology transfer, and attract and support people working to start and grow competitive businesses.
- Support quality of life measures that enhance the local business climate and attract employees.
- Promote development of a strong land-based rural economy.
- Provide opportunities to all residents to develop the skills necessary to obtain high-quality employment.
- Ensure the benefits and costs of economic development incentives are distributed equitably and there is an open and transparent process for decision-making.

### Housing

- Encourage a variety of housing options in development focus areas.
- Support new development of housing whose total costs, including utility and transportation expenses, are affordable to households with a range of incomes.
- Promote energy efficient housing.
- Provide housing options for an aging population.
- Maintain an adequate supply of housing for people requiring supportive services.
- Improve the existing housing stock.

### Transportation

- Maintain and improve critical elements of the existing transportation network to support the safe movement of people and goods.
- Reduce the use of fossil fuels in transportation.
- Shift travel away from driving-alone to biking, walking, carpooling/ ridesharing, and using public transit.
- Support a pattern of land use that allows people to move efficiently and affordably.
- Provide for the safe and effective movement of freight to, from, and within the county.
- Continue to provide airport services that support community and business needs.
- Consider the needs of populations that are particularly challenged by transportation when developing systems and alternatives.

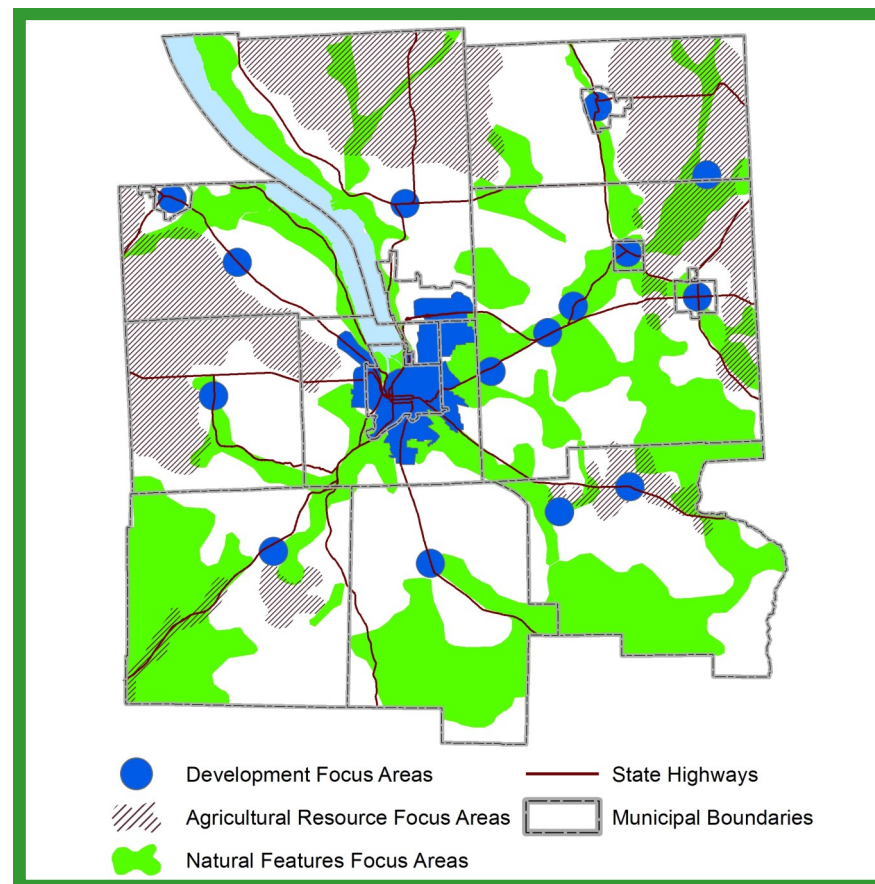
## THE ENVIRONMENT

### Natural Resources

- Preserve natural features and ecosystems, especially within the Natural Features Focus Areas.
- Protect farmland within the Agricultural Resource Focus Areas for agricultural use.
- Reduce the adverse impacts to native species and ecosystems caused by invasive organisms and climate change.
- Promote best management practices that protect natural resources and productive working lands.
- Improve public access to outdoor recreation resources and opportunities.

### Water Resources

- Protect the ecological, economic, and recreational functions of Cayuga Lake.
- Protect aquifers from contamination by limiting development within groundwater recharge areas.
- Protect streams and their watersheds to maintain water quality, manage stormwater and flooding, and enhance ecological diversity.
- Preserve existing wetlands and restore wetland functions.
- Support water-dependent or -enhanced development of the City's urban waterfront while conserving important natural resources and providing public enjoyment of the waterfront.



## CLIMATE CHANGE

### Energy and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reliance on fossil fuels across all sectors.
- Improve the energy efficiency of all components of the community energy system.
- Increase the use of local and regional renewable energy sources and technologies.
- Increase carbon capture and storage in the county's forests, wetlands, and soils.
- Reduce the amount of material disposed of in landfills.

### Adaptation

- Maintain floodways and limit development within floodplains to reduce damages from floods.
- Improve connectivity of open space to prevent fragmentation of ecosystems and isolation of plant and wildlife populations.
- Promote adaptation measures that lessen climate impacts on the local economy.
- Encourage actions that protect vulnerable populations from the impacts of climate change.
- Prepare for community recovery in the event of disaster.

## NEIGHBORHOODS AND COMMUNITIES

### Healthy Communities

- Promote bicycling and walking throughout the county by making these transportation modes safe, efficient, and appealing options.
- Encourage the development of lively streets with a variety of opportunities for daily activity, recreation, and social interaction.
- Foster the expansion of a countywide trail network.
- Encourage efforts to improve the accessibility of the built environment to allow everyone to participate in community life.
- Promote parks, community facilities, recreational activities, and networks that support regular social interaction and physical activity.
- Discourage land uses that threaten community health and safety.

### Development Patterns

- Strengthen downtowns as retail, service, employment, and community centers.
- Encourage municipalities to protect rural character and scenic resources by limiting sprawl.
- Promote more housing and mixed-use development in Development Focus Areas.
- Support land use policies and regulations and public infrastructure improvements to encourage private investment in the Development Focus Areas.
- Preserve and enhance the distinct identities and historic character of existing communities.